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THE FRENCH SCHOOL SYSTEM

The Past Twenty Years Have Witnessed Much Improvement in Methods.

Opportunity for All, Not Only in Primary but in Higher Branches—Compulsory Education and Separation of the Sexes.

Special Correspondence of the Sunday Journal.

PARIS, March 15.—Even though there were no other improvements it could show the third republic has abundantly justified its existence by the development it has effected in the educational system. Public education in France is divided into three departments—primary, secondary and higher—and each of these has experienced within twenty years an infusion of new life, coupled with an extension of its boundaries, such as had not been known in the preceding fifty years, and which, under the old order of things, might not have been realized for half a century to come. Chief amongst these developments is that which has made primary education compulsory, and at the same time absolutely free. Another is the rapid multiplication of technical schools, which have increased at such a rate under the new impulse given to them that the twenty-six which existed in 1879 had grown in 1883 to the number of four hundred, with the most gratifying progress since that time. Then there was the establishment in 1880 of public lycees for girls, which the state held to be necessary, owing to the fact that the training of the womanhood of the country had been heretofore almost entirely in the hands of the Catholic Church. This, it need hardly be said, is another reform which has produced gratifying results; and finally there has been witnessed in France, since the republic was re-established, a complete severance, after a brave and prolonged struggle, of the entire educational system, both in its higher and lower grades, from the domination and even from the interference of every form of ecclesiasticism.

There is no reason now why every one in France should not be educated, and why the poorest may not aspire after the highest educational privileges this enlightened government is holding out. Not only is primary education gratuitous, but the training offered in the university is virtually so, and as to the intermediary stages and the schooling offered to those who wish to perfect themselves in special branches, this also is practically free to those who cannot afford to pay for it. The lycees and colleges, it is true, exact a small sum for tuition and board. This is done that those having the means may have the privilege of helping out the government in the great burdens it has assumed in behalf of those not so well off in the world. It should be noted, too, that these institutions, which are classed as the agencies of secondary education, receive for pay pupils who would otherwise be eligible, owing to their tender age, for free tuition in the schools of the primary department. Those who desire exclusiveness can have it at the minimum of cost, and what makes this arrangement one which cannot be objected to by the poor, is that the same schools are open at a later period to those who pass with superior credit through the free schools. This the government provides for by a most generous offer of scholarship, and it speaks volumes in praise of both the system and the pupils, that there have been periods in which the children of the working people, those attending the state primary schools, have profited by this offer of scholarships to the number of from 3,000 to 4,000 a year.

CONTESTS WITH THE CHURCH.

The conferring of degrees is a matter which the government has gotten now entirely into its own hands. Upon this point it has had a fierce contest with the church, but the church has been defeated. Considering, too, that the bachelor's degree is requisite in France to admission into the professions, as well as for appointment to certain offices of state, like that of judges, for instance, it would seem as though the government, in carrying out its motto of liberty and equality, had no other course open to it. Another fierce contest had to be waged with the church upon the grave question of the qualifications required in teachers. Under the old system the teaching in primary schools was largely in the hands of nuns and members of Catholic brotherhoods, and all that was deemed necessary in the appointment of such teachers was that their fitness should be certified to by some bishop or lady superior. But other aspirants for places of this kind had to pass an examination and be certified by the state. Here was decided inequality, not to say injustice, and the republic has cut this knot of difficulty by putting all teachers upon the same level. In fact, it has gone further than this, and has provided that after a certain period, now nearly expired, no members of a religious order shall be employed in state schools under any circumstances.

After this statement it will be no news to say that the teaching of religion is not allowed in the public schools of France. It may, however, be something of a surprise to learn that the curricula makes special provision for moral teaching, especially so when it is intimated that the moral teaching afforded includes the duties owed by man to the Supreme Being. What the government has aimed at has been merely the exclusion of dogmatic religious teaching. In other words, it has taken a firm stand against the conversion of state schools into parochial schools and the use of public money and government sanction, as these have been largely used heretofore, in upholding the national supremacy of a particular church. The state is careful to declare in this matter that it is not opposed to religion itself, and it has practically demonstrated this, one would think, by the religious scope it allows in the teaching of morals. What is more, this accommodating government has made it possible for religious instruction by the various churches to go on, if those interested wish it to do so, concurrently with its own gratuitously imparted secular instruction. This, by providing that during one entire day of each week the state school shall be closed, leaving the children to go elsewhere as parents, priests or pastors may desire them to do.

THE UNIVERSITY OF FRANCE.

Recurring to the subject of higher education, it must be noted that there is but one university for the whole of France. Strictly speaking, in fact, the University of France embraces the entire educational system, with every school controlled by the three departments before mentioned. That, however, which answers to our notion of university teaching is carried on by what are called academies, these being divided again into various faculties. In all there are seventeen academies, and these, of course, are conveniently distributed among the largest towns. Paris has one, and inevitably it is the best. The city is indeed the only place where all the faculties of instruction are represented, the other centers of higher education being vigorously blessed in this respect according to their importance or enterprise, some of them having only one or two of these faculties. Naturally, therefore, Paris draws upon the whole nation, and has, perhaps, a full one-half of all the students. To show how completely the dominant church has been driven from its former position in university teaching, we need cite only one fact, which is that it has not a single faculty of theology under state auspices, whereas the Protestants have two, one at Paris and the other at Montaubon. Not only so, but the Catholic Church has few properly accredited representatives amongst the 1,600 or more university professors, a fact, however, which has, unfortunately, its dark side, for it is estimated by those thoroughly familiar with university life, that about four out of every six of the professors are agnostics, the same authorities assuring us that the proportion of agnostics among students is still greater.

The discipline in lycees and colleges partakes naturally of that which is in vogue in well-regulated French homes. There is perhaps no country where adult life travels so generally along lines which the American would call "fast," and at the same time, we know of no civilized country in which boys and girls, up to a certain age, are kept under such strict surveillance. Perhaps the later excesses are a natural rebound from the earlier repression. Be this as it may, youthful life in France, whether at home or at school, is very much of a prison life for both sexes. We are referring now particularly to high-class schools, which are largely patronized by the bourgeois, and where many of the pupils are received as boarders. The boys, when taken out for a walk, are always vigilantly attended, and they carry about with them a most distressing air of shyness. One is impressed, indeed, that they are altogether effeminate in their appearance, affording a complete contrast in both physique and manners to American school boys of the same age and class. As for the poor girls, they are more demure looking than the average nun, and when you learn what their lives are you are not surprised at this. They are watched as vigilantly at night as by day. Literally they are never free from oversight, not even when they are asleep, for the rule in the new lycees for girls is to lodge them in long dormitories, holding thirty or more beds, these being separated only by a screen, and each dormitory has its female guard, who overlooks these sleeping innocents as vigorously, they say, as though she were a death watch keeping vigil over condemned criminals.

As to day scholars, they are never allowed, if they are girls, to make the distance between home and school unattended. Generally an omnibus is at their service, and if this is not used the discipline of the school makes it imperative that they shall be accompanied there and back by some female chaperon, this rule being so strict that its infraction would be visited by the pupil's expulsion. There is little danger, however, for French mammas are as rigorously scrupulous in this matter as are the managers of French schools. It is, in fact, in strict harmony with the entire French system, which not only secludes girls from association before marriage with the opposite sex, but which keeps them apart until the school life is finished from society of every kind. The French school girl knows nothing of parties, not even of dove parties. Such diversions are not tolerated by either parents or tutors. The school years are years of mechanical drudgery and social abnegation, the result being, of course, that they are well educated—no doubt about that—but are as little fitted for actual contact with the struggles and temptations of such a life as is before them in France as can possibly be imagined.

SEPARATING THE SEXES.

To the faculties, which represent what Americans would call university teaching, women are admitted side by side with men, and in the various professions represented, not excepting those of surgery and medicine, they are allowed in these days an equal chance with the lords of creation to practice on an unsuspecting public. But in subordinate education the sexes are taught separately. This is required by the law, and the stipulation applies almost as rigidly to primary as to secondary schools. Every commune having more than five hundred inhabitants must have both its boys' and girls' department—if not in separate buildings, at least in separate rooms and with separate entrances. It is also an invariable custom for the girls to be taught by those of their own sex, and the boys the same. They are very particular in France about matters of this kind. The only variations are in maternal schools, where the children are taken before the primary schools are open to them and in private schools, which are allowed by a special dispensation of the government to teach the sexes together in special cases up to the age of ten. This reminds us, too, that private schools, those which are not supported, but are only inspected by the state, cut a considerable figure in France, and that most of them, as a matter of course, are maintained by the money and in the interest of the Roman Catholic Church. Over these the government assumes control only in regard to sanitation and morals.

The compulsory school age is from six to thirteen years. Between those periods all children must be enrolled in either a public or private school, and in case it is the wish of parents to have their children instructed at home, not only must this matter of enrollment be attended to, but after the age of eight these pampered offsprings of fortune are liable technically to a yearly examination. This, to satisfy the responsible authorities that they are not growing up illiterate. When children, not otherwise provided for, are not in attendance at the state schools, the names of their parents, as an admonitory step, are placarded on the Town Hall, and later on, if the offense be continued, they are fined, and, as a last resort, may be imprisoned by a justice of the peace. Corporal punishment is not allowed in the schools of France, but it will interest Americans to know that one thing which is allowed in them, or at least over them, is the national flag. It is in fact more than allowed; it is required, and the reason assigned is that all public school buildings being state buildings, they must naturally share with other government property the honor of floating the tricolor.

All teachers are required to take a normal course, or its equivalent. There are two examinations. After passing the first the certificate obtained entitles its holder to a position only in country schools; for service in the centers of intelligence a would-be pedagogue must have qualified in full. What makes it easier than it would otherwise be to enforce the compulsory clause in French education, is that those who attend school from six to thirteen, or who pass the standard before thirteen, are accredited to the community as having done so, the credentials they thus acquire being of great service to them in entering business life; so much so that a boy lacking this recommendation would hardly be engaged for anything but manual labor. Thus everything seems to favor the new educational movement, and that the movement itself will bring favorable returns to the republic which has brought it to pass cannot be doubted.

HENRY TUCKLEY.

The Rev. Henry Tuckley.

Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

Rev. Henry Tuckley, who has been called to the pastorate of Trinity Church in this city, has distinguished himself both as a preacher and a journalist, his time having largely been given to literary work. Among his published books are two volumes of sermons, "Life's Golden Morning," for young people, and "Forward March." He has also published a book descriptive of the rural and home life of England, called "Under the Queen." During the past few years he has written at least five books of travel, which are now in press. He has done a great deal of corresponding for the leading daily papers of New York, Boston, Chicago and Indianapolis, as well as for the denominational press. He is described as a man of wide reading as well as of oratorical ability.

Rev. Mr. Tuckley was born in England in 1850, but his whole education was American. He entered the ministry in 1874, being first connected with the Cincinnati conference, occupying some of its leading pulpits, such as Christ's Church, of Cincinnati, and St. Paul's church, of Springfield, O. In 1882, he went abroad for a year and a half, during which time he was engaged in literary work, chiefly descriptive of foreign countries. In 1884 he returned and entered a pastorate and in 1887 he was transfered to the New England South Conference, occupying the pulpit of the Matthewson-street Church in Providence, R. I., for two years. In 1888 his health failed and he returned to the West, being assigned to Union Church, Covington, Ky., one of the most prominent Methodist churches in the country. In 1890 he was invited to Lexington, Ky., where he remained two years and a half. In the spring of 1892 he went abroad again for study and literary work, the results of which will soon appear in several books. Since 1889 he has been on the supernumerary list of the Kentucky Conference, with which he is still associated. He left Rotterdam last Saturday, and will arrive in the course of a week, in readiness to occupy the pulpit in case he is assigned. He brings with him his family, consisting of a wife and three children.

STORM DAMAGE AT THE WHITE CITY.

A Few of the Exhibit Buildings Injured and a Restaurant's Towers Twisted.

CHICAGO, April 8.—All night the inspectors of the construction department at the fair grounds made anxious tours among the great structures that bore the brunt of the heavy storm last night. The main solicitude was in regard to the great roofs, which were called upon to bear the weight of deluge after deluge of water driven by a wind almost cyclonic in its force. While the damage done was comparatively small, the white city did not escape wholly unscathed. The Kentucky headquarters was the sufferer among the State buildings. The construction on this building had been delayed from lack of funds to complete it, and the work of placing the siding had only lately been begun. The open side of the building was toward the wind, and several hundred feet of siding was ripped off. Among the foreign buildings the Swedish building was the unlucky one, a number of boards being blown off. Among the main fair structures damage was confined to minor leaks, started in the roof of the fisheries, the United States government and transportation buildings. In the last-named structures the painters will be obliged to do over again considerable work. No exhibits were injured, except a number of photographs in the New South Wales collection.

Close to the fisheries building stands a half-completed restaurant, called "The Cafe d'Marine." It was a very elaborate affair, circled by a series of round towers rising to a height of seventy-two feet. Surmounting it were four pyramidal-shaped towers rising one hundred feet high and surmounted by heavy gabled and corniced roofs. The structure was very top heavy and poorly braced, none of the timbers apparently running through from story to story. The structure showed the effects of the wind more than any other on the grounds, being twisted and wrenched to the northeast fully three feet out of plumb. The circling towers reminded one of the pictures so familiar of the leaning tower of Pisa. The building cannot be drawn back to its proper position, but will be torn down.

Parlor Manufacturers Organize.

CHICAGO, April 8.—Manufacturers of parlor furniture formed an organization yesterday. No constitution has yet been agreed to, and the details of the work it is intended to accomplish have not been defined. Following are the officers chosen: President, H. W. Mallen, Chicago; vice president, Charles M. Hunt, Milwaukee; secretary, D. Schaus, Toledo; treasurer, Joseph Scheid, Cincinnati.

GRAND ARMY ENCAMPMENT

The Most Important and Significant Meeting the Department Has Held.

Contest Over the Perversion of the Monument—Interest in the Soldiers' Home—A Fresh Alignment of the Order in Indiana.

Veterans who have attended nearly all the State encampments expressed the opinion that while the attendance has usually been larger than at Evansville, in none of its predecessors has there been such a unanimity of sentiment and evidences of a greater appreciation of the value of genuine comradeship. Upon no subject was there a contest, much less a controversy. If there were differences of opinion regarding the method of dealing with different subjects, the desire to arrive at the best means for attaining the desired end led to unanimity of action.

In regard to the monument, there were a few at the outset who privately expressed the opinion that it might be better to drop the contention with the Langsdale coterie, but when they learned of his insults to its committees and petitions, and when he ignored the monument committee by issuing a report as the report of the committee, and sending it around through the mails, and to an Evansville member of the Grand Army to circulate, they at once went over to the majority, and made the action unanimous, and emphatically so. All the active men in the organization are pledged to an effort to have the dates in the upper astragal removed. Those persons who have been declaring that the opposition to the Langsdale perversion of the monument comes only from a few cranks, or contentious persons, who represent no real element in the Grand Army or the community, would have come to a different conclusion had they attended the Evansville encampment.

The matter of a State soldiers' home was as much talked of as any subject. Veterans in every part of the State see the necessity for it, and there is a determination to carry out the work which has been begun. The experience of eighteen States sustains the scheme on the ground of economy. At the encampment George H. Thomas Post, of this city, made the first pledge to build a cottage. John H. Logan Post made the second. If the officers of the Woman's Relief Corps could have been present they might have made the first pledge, since, by a vote, they pledged the money to build a cottage. Col. D. N. Foster, of Fort Wayne, was the first man to announce, in behalf of a citizen, a pledge to build a cottage. At the same time, W. H. Tucker was on his feet to announce that, as the spokesman of a citizen of Indianapolis, he pledged a cottage, speaking of course, for himself. Action was taken to have every part of the State canvassed to obtain pledges for cottages, costing $500 or more, the purpose being to have the posts in each county, as far as possible, raise money for a cottage to be named therefor. The encampment voted to go to Lafayette next year because the home has been located there. The members desire to see the place and to hold a meeting there to give the movement an impetus.

THE PENSION QUESTION.

One feature of the action of the encampment deserves to be emphasized, because it disproves the charge that the Grand Army is an organization whose only purpose of existence is to raid the treasury for pensions. Past Commander Cheadle emphasized the order of Commander-in-chief Weissert to posts to make careful inquiry in their various localities to ascertain and report cases, if such could be found, where persons are receiving pensions to which they are not entitled. Action was taken to the end that pensioners whose habits would lead them to spend their money in inebriation should be put under guardianship to the extent that the bounty accorded them by the government should be paid to their families. Speaking of the phrase "riotous living," used by a report referring to this subject, a veteran remarked that so long as the average of all pensions paid is $133.40 per annum, a great many could not live very riotously a very long time upon the money received. Col. Zollinger, the popular pension agent under Mr. Cleveland, tells of a pensioner who, receiving $1 per month, appended a note to his quarterly voucher for $3 requesting the pension agent to send his money as soon as possible, as he "wanted to buy a farm with it."

There is probably more unanimity and real comradeship in the Grand Army in Indiana to-day than at any previous period. It has been assailed as mercenary, as a "burden like the grasshopper." Predictions have been made that it would go to pieces when it could not raid the treasury or be used as a political machine, and that in this State the dissensions over the monument would break it up. Its enemies have declared that the organization in Indianapolis is hostile to the entertainment of the National Encampment. All such slanders and abuse have come to its members, and as a result the ranks are reforming and the elbow touch has been taken anew, while the motto, "Charity, Fraternity and Loyalty," has a greater significance. The truth is, the encampment was enthusiatic over the prospect of the National Encampment. When the commander-in-chief predicted in his speech that Grand Army men would be here in thousands the announcement was received with enthusiastic cheering. The delegates went home to organize and uniform for the great parade, so that the Indiana Department, bringing up the rear of the column, will march through the streets of Indianapolis fifteen thousand strong. Scores of comrades spoke of the generosity of Indianapolis, and of the rare good fortune that the city and the Grand Army had a man like Colonel Lilly to organize success. "We'll see you in September at Indianapolis," was the parting word at Evansville.

THE NEW OFFICERS.

While the Department of Indiana has always been well served by its officers it was the remark that it had never selected a better set of officers than those elected at Evansville. James T. Johnston is well known throughout the State. He is a ready and effective speaker, which is a special qualification for a year in which the National Encampment will be the guests of the Department of Indiana. C. J. Murphy, of Evansville, is a man of high character, and one whose influence will be felt upon the organization in "the Pocket." W. F. Medsker, junior vice commander, of Cambridge City, is one of the youngest of Indiana soldiers, who could not have got into the service if the war had ended in 1862, but did get into the Seventy-fifth Regiment later, where he did faithful service. He is now a successful attorney and an active Grand Army man. Dr. J. Y. Hitt, of Greensburg, is one of the veteran physicians of the State, a comrade who takes an active part in Grand Army affairs. Chaplain Reed served four years in the United States signal service, and is now pastor of the Christian Church in Noblesville. Phil H. Dickinson is the alternate delegate at large to the National Encampment.

Perhaps the most significant feature attending any encampment was an informal conference held the night before the session. It was not secret; but every man could enter and have his word. It was called for consultation; but, in effect, the most influential men in the organization, representing both parties, there foreshadowed the future policy of the Grand Army in Indiana. A score of men who have been for years among the most influential citizens in their respective localities were there in council. Important questions were discussed, and a general policy foreshadowed, not so much by votes as by the purpose which the expression of opinion inspired in the minds of those who participated.